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ABSTRACT

This report describes the results of a study aimed at presenting a broad picture of educational opportunities open to unemployed adults in England and to identify problems and possible solutions. Material for the report was gathered through visits to a variety of institutions and agencies in urban and rural areas of England. The report is organized in eight chapters. The first two chapters cover the problems of recruiting adult unemployed persons into educational settings, and the possibility of recruiting persons through agencies that serve the jobless, such as unemployment offices and trade unions. Chapter three points out the necessity of making course offerings accessible to their audience, while the fourth chapter describes the types of courses that are currently available to the unemployed, as well as those that serve a wider clientele. In the fifth chapter, types of counseling available to the unemployed are discussed. The sixth and seventh chapters describe the sources of funding for adult education programs, and training needs of teachers of the unemployed and the use of volunteers respectively. In the final chapter, the validity of the educational experience is chronicled; i.e., the importance of adult education and the positive effects it has had on those unemployed persons who were able to be reached. (KC)

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PREFACE

In March 1984, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Education and Science, Mr Peter Brooke, announced that funds were to be made available to finance a three-year development programme (now known as the REPLAN programme) to encourage the further development of suitable educational opportunities for unemployed adults. In collaboration with the many statutory and voluntary providers of education, and building upon the many local initiatives which are already being taken, the programme will be seeking to identify and disseminate good practice, to evaluate innovative provision, and to promote collaboration between the many agencies who may be able to contribute, in whatever way, to meeting the educational needs of the unemployed. As a central means towards the achievement of these objectives, two complementary programmes of REPLAN development projects are being managed by the Further Education Unit (FEU) and the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE), and an advisory team of Field Officers is being appointed and managed by NIACE.

In 1983, when the REPLAN programme was still under consideration, the Department had commissioned Mrs Joan McDonald, a former member of Her Majesty's Inspectorate, to carry out a short study of current educational provision for the unemployed, to supplement and up-date the information already available from published sources. Her enquiry, carried out during the last four months of the year, included consultation with a wide range of institutions and agencies, statutory and voluntary, and visits to see provision in 13 LEA areas (and three WEA districts); and her findings have been of considerable value as an input to the planning and implementation of the REPLAN Programme. The Department is most grateful to Mrs McDonald herself for the amount of ground which she was able to cover in so short a time, and to the many people who found the time to talk or write to her.

The present paper by Mrs McDonald, distilled from the substantial volume of material resulting from her enquiry, gives an overview of what she saw and learned about the current state of provision for the adult unemployed, and sets out some of the principal impressions which she formed through her observation and discussions. The views expressed in the paper are those of the writer and/or those with whom she spoke or corresponded; and as Mrs McDonald emphasises in her own Introduction, the paper claims neither to be comprehensive in its coverage nor definitive in its judgments. But none of this, in the Department's view, should detract from the value of the paper as a statement of some of the key issues which face those seeking to develop provision for the unemployed, and as a stimulus to discussion among providers and practitioners as to ways and means of tackling those issues. Having derived material assistance from Mrs McDonald's work, the Department hopes that her findings will aslo be found valuable by the wider audience to whom this paper is now being made available.

Department of Education and Science
October 1984

EDUCATIONAL PROVISION IN ENGLAND FOR UNEMPLOYED ADULTS: PROBLEMS AND GOOD PRACTICE. SEPTEMBER-DECEMBER 1983

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INTRODUCTION

In the following pages an attempt is made to deal with some issues arising from an enquiry undertaken for the Department of Education and Science during the period from 1 September to 31 December 1983. The purpose of the enquiry was twofold: to present a broad picture of educational opportunities open to unemployed adults and to identify problems and good practice.

During the limited time available it was not possible to be other than selective, but an attempt was made to visit contrasting urban and rural areas in different parts of England and to contact and meet staff from a variety of institutions and agencies.

The enquiry coincided with a survey by HM Inspectors of provision made for the unemployed by the WEA. Visits to WEA Districts were therefore limited in order not to duplicate work already being done. The HMI report was, however, made available to the writer and has since been published.*

Since ALBSU publishes its own detailed annual reports with descriptions of the projects it supports, and in view of the limited time available for this enquiry, less attention is given to this organisation than its role in work with the unemployed would otherwise justify.

Detailed material relating to particular areas and institutions is not included, though it forms the basis of conclusions reached. Except where it is necessary to distinguish between providers, the term "adult education" is used in its broadest sense to include formal and informal provision made in a variety of contexts by statutory and voluntary organisations. "Adult" is intended to cover those over the age of eligibility for the Youth Training Scheme.

The importance of the Manpower Services Commission's role in the training of the unemployed, and the extensive relationships which exist between adult education and MSC programmes is recognised. It is also accepted that the line between education and training is not always easy to draw. However, this enquiry was directed to education and not to training.

The title is not intended to imply any kind of definitive statement. Problems are not always capable of solution; good practice must often be based on an empirical approach to local situations; it may well be that the experience of some providers is very different from what is reported here. The intention is to express as fairly as possible a view, albeit incomplete, of what was seen and what was said during the course of this enquiry.

The writer wishes to thank the staff of LEAs, Universities, the WEA, and other voluntary bodies and agencies who gave their time so generously to talk about the work they were doing and to arrange for it to be seen, and also to the many unemployed students who talked or wrote so readily about their problems and their experiences in adult education.

Joan McDonald
21 August 1984

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* 'Workers Educational Association Provision for Unemployed Adults': Report by HM Inspectors, July 1984.

I. RECRUITMENT

If unemployed adults are to be attracted into education, there are a number of inhibiting factors which affect a substantial proportion of the potential client group and which the educator must seek to overcome. Three of the most significant may be summarised as: ignorance of what is available; isolation; and deep-seated attitudes towards education. There are many unemployed people who do come into adult education of their own volition. They know where to look for information; they find what they want in traditional forms of advertising such as the brochure in the public library or the advertisement in the local press. Many more do not know how to seek out information; they may not even know that adult education exists, and if they do know, it may not occur to them that education is relevant either to their interests or their problems. They may never go into a public library where adult education material is displayed; they might not see a leaflet even if it was, so to speak, staring them in the face.

There are those who know about the existence of adult education, but for various reasons dismiss it or fail to associate it with their own interests. It was reported as not uncommon, during recruitment campaigns, for unemployed people to say flatly that adult education had nothing to offer them, and then, in response to enquiries, to list interests and hobbies which were part of the regular service of local adult education centres.

The problem of getting information to the unemployed is increased by their isolation. One man in middle age, encountered in a WEA class, said that after being made redundant for the second time, he shut himself up in his front room, drew the curtains and spent hours pacing the floor. Another younger man said that for nearly a year, before joining a "second chance" course in a college of further education, he had seen no-one but his immediate family. Friends, neighbours and even near relatives avoided him and he avoided them, because they were embarrassed in each others' company. He felt he had dropped out of the real world.

A door-to-door enquiry undertaken by one polytechnic revealed that unemployed men withdrew from social contacts; they neither sought nor received support from neighbours or relations; within their own family circle relations were strained. There was concern about the effect of unemployment on health, and how the unemployment of the father might adversely affect the behaviour or school performance of the children. Similar views were often expressed during discussions with students in classes.

Several women, asked why they had come to classes, spoke of their desperate need to get out of the house and to be with other adults. For them the experience of isolation felt by unemployed men seemed to be a normal condition of life. One woman asked why more was not done to provide information for those still at work

but facing redundancy. She pointed out that for many women, work was the only point of social contact. Women do not have the same access to pubs and clubs that some unemployed men may still enjoy. They are less likely to hear about opportunities and pick up information by word of mouth.

There have been attempts to forestall this drift into isolation by moving, as this woman suggested, into the work place where redundancies were threatened. It has even been possible to get from employers the names of workers likely to be made redundant. However, these strategies were not always successful because workers and unions fought redundancies as long as possible and were unwilling to look at alternatives which implied accepting defeat.

A number of project workers did point out that many of the newly unemployed needed time to collect themselves. Students in classes agreed with this assessment. They said that their first reaction was to catch up with jobs in house and garden which had been waiting for their attention. Only after some months did the full realisation of their situation strike home. At this point they began to look round for alternatives out of desperation.

As well as ignorance and isolation, attitudinal barriers may need to be overcome. Education may be regarded as the minimum essential preparation for adult working life rather than as an ongoing process and a means toward the development and enrichment of personality. For those who believe that education ends with school and that real life begins with work, the whole concept of adult learning is novel.

It may also be difficult to grasp that there are choices in life. If several generations of the same family have worked at the factory round the corner it may be difficult to visualise life when the factory closes down. It may not readily occur to someone who has worked as a plumber all his life that he might have done, or might now do, something else. It is well known that women whose lives have been limited by household and family tend to denigrate themselves and their ability to learn.

Those whose experience of life has been broad and who associate education with success tackle new tasks with confidence and are less worried by the fear of failure. Limited education and experience, however, impose a sense of determinism which is difficult to break through. It was remarked that many unemployed people coming into adult education for the first time chose to go on doing what they had done all their lives, or something as near as possible to it. Sometimes this was because they were "keeping their hand in" in case a job opportunity arose; but it also seemed that it did not occur to them that they could do anything else.

It is also possible that many adults are inhibited from returning to education because they fear loss of status. Self-respect is strongly related to the professional role or craft practised in working life. One coordinator working with an informal network said that when groups first met the participants were only concerned to establish status by reference to previous employment. A middle-aged man encountered in a basic education class said that he needed to relearn to write because for years his secretary had done "all that sort of thing" for him. Thus, feelings of loss of status may keep the unemployed from taking part in education, and delay adaptation when they do.

Fears of losing status may be accentuated by recruitment campaigns aimed too blatantly at the unemployed. During this enquiry, some principals and centre heads were sometimes nervous about discussions with students on the subject of unemployment. One director of a university department of adult education attributed the disastrous failure of a campaign launched in 1980 to the fact that publicity was aimed directly at the unemployed.

Those who do not look back on their experience at school with much pleasure or sense of achievement are unlikely to be attracted to adult education. For many young people the sense of inadequacy generated by failure at school has been compounded by unemployment. In two areas visited, adult education staff remarked on the absence of the 18 to 25 age group from all kinds of provision. One county council obtained MSC funding for a one year action research project, to investigate the needs of this age group with a view to making provision for them. The project worker spoke of the feelings of alienation and rejection expressed by young people who were failures in their own eyes and saw themselves as failures in other people's. They were difficult to reach and to provide for because they did not join youth clubs or go to community centres or participate in any groups or organisations. There was no infrastructure through which the project worker could reach his prospective clients.

Older people were said to have feelings of guilt and worthlessness. One outreach worker said that some people in the 35 to 50 age group resisted the idea of leisure activities because they felt that if they did not work, they had no right to enjoy leisure.

Effective publicity has always been a preoccupation of adult education workers. It is accepted that the unemployed cannot be reached without vigorous and positive recruitment campaigns. Despite the difficulties and doubts expressed above, much publicity is directed specifically to the unemployed and seems to be successful. Techniques of recruitment can be dealt with only briefly here.

Publicity has to be simple, direct, uncluttered and eye-catching. Only a minority are prepared, or indeed have the skills, to find their way through a brochure.

Single sheets are used to make clear, simple statements about one particular kind of provision. Single leaflets also advertise drop-in centres, where wider information is available. Where appropriate, publicity is written in languages other than English. One authority has produced cards which give information about agencies, including educational, where help and advice can be found.

Efforts are made to get publicity to potential clients as directly as possible. In some areas, news sheets are delivered directly to doors. One authority persuaded two breweries to put illustrated beer mats in pubs and clubs. This campaign brought seven hundred enquiries within a fortnight. The unemployed are addressed directly: "Unemployed? Don't just sit there. Do something about it!"

Feature articles in newspapers are regarded as more effective than straight advertisements. A letter to the local paper from an unemployed student describing his educational experiences in a community college was said to have brought more enquiries than an expensive full-page advertisement.

Local radio and television are said to be effective forms of publicity. Two members of an informal unemployed group appeared on "Pebble Mill at One", which resulted in telephone enquiries from all over the country. A number of periodicals are produced and edited by unemployed groups which contain information about provision and support, and these can be used by providers to advertise their own initiatives.

Publicity has to be placed where the unemployed are likely to see it, in the many informal centres such as the TUC centres for the unemployed, community and drop-in centres. Where good relations are established with DHSS and job centre staff, these also provide space for publicity.

A direct approach to the public by means of display is frequently used. A display in a supermarket provided publicity in one area; in another a bay of

Marks and Spencers, which was visible from both outside and inside the store, was used. In both cases there was information and students' work on display. Staff and students attended to give information and to demonstrate various crafts. A similar exhibition was mounted in an indoor shopping precinct. Such exhibitions are not always aimed directly at the unemployed, but they reach and attract people who know little about adult education and are said to be effective in bringing in new clients.

In one case, the project workers brought unemployed people into the adult education centre to show them what kinds of activities were available to them.

The use of buses which travel to disadvantaged estates is well established in a number of cities and towns. These are multi-purpose. It is usual to use the top deck as a play area for small children while parents on the lower deck may look at books in the lending library, which are often for second language speakers or for people with reading difficulties, or examine publicity for education and advisory services, or to consult a representative from CAB, from a counselling agency, or from education. In one case a project leader was able to secure the loan of a caravan for six months (renewable) from a local firm to carry publicity to council estates and villages. Another project has a special "welfare rights" bus.

Despite what was often said about the problems of anticipating redundancies and moving into factories to recruit, cases were reported where Trade Unions, employers and personnel managers facilitated contacts with workers facing redundancy. In one case a tutor attempted to recruit managerial staff in this way; in another, Asian cotton workers were counselled prior to redundancies.

There are a number of professional counselling agencies over the country, some of which have developed outreach techniques to help the unemployed. Two encountered in the present survey were initially developed to cater for people with specific queries, often relating to higher or further education. Both had a professional worker in the city's central library and an outreach worker. Recently, both organisations have become involved in a more positive and active way in providing a service for the unemployed. In one case EEC funding has provided for an increase in staff and their placement in adult education centres. The second agency initiated an outreach scheme to inform, counsel and recruit unemployed people in co-operation with adult and further education institutions, the WEA and the job centres. This involved putting staff into job centres and setting up temporary counselling centres nearby, one in a caravan.

Wardens and part time staff in TUC centres and LEA and voluntary community centres regard it as part of their job to give information and advice about educational opportunities. There are a great many volunteers, some from among the unemployed, who act in this way, in a variety of informal situations. It is also usual for groups of unemployed who have their own premises or rooms to provide this kind of service. Professional counselling is provided in some long established drop-in centres; at least one centre visited had a full time professional counsellor whose contacts with the LEA enabled him to provide regular educational activities within the centre and referral of his clients to other educational opportunities outside it. In these contexts education is of course likely to be only one among a great variety of problems on which information and help is sought.

The most direct method of recruitment is the door-to-door approach. One LEA undertook a project, funded by ALBSU, in a rural area, to try to discover how effective their posters, leaflets and advertisements were. The method of

research included a door-to-door enquiry. They discovered that this exercise soon became the most effective form of recruitment. In 1981 the SE Scotland District WEA, with funding from the Scottish Basic Education Unit used this method to contact and interview thirty-one unemployed adults. On the basis of these interviews an educational programme was planned.* Other WEA Districts planned to use this model with the help of MSC funded one-year appointments, under the Community Programme, but the decision of the tutors to reject MSC funding has prevented this. The polytechnic referred to above (page 2) used twelve project workers, of which four were funded by MSC, for door-to-door interviews.

This approach is of course expensive of staff time, and much depends on how provision can be developed to meet the needs which such enquiries reveal.

Within the context of trying to develop special programmes for the unemployed, recruitment techniques and the formulation of programmes and curricula have to go hand in hand. It is necessary to capture the interest of clients for whom education has been normally regarded as less than a panacea; the sense of involvement is a prerequisite for success.

However, although much time and effort is spent on new ways of reaching the unemployed, there is still conviction that "word of mouth" remains effective. At one independent agency it was said that they never advertised and always had a waiting list.

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* 'Adult Education and the Unemployed', ed. C Kirkwood and S Griffiths. Workers Educational Association, September 1984.

II. WORKING THROUGH AGENCIES

There is a strong conviction that the unemployed can be reached through and with the support of those agencies which might be expected to be in touch with them. By the more far-sighted this is regarded as a means not only of reaching unemployed people but also of enlisting support for education by agencies which might be co-opted as partners in educational endeavours. Project workers' reports often list the agencies they have contacted. The most frequently contacted are job centres, TUC centres, CAB and DHSS, although many others are also mentioned. It does seem, however, that the agencies which might be expected to give support do not always do so.

Some educational workers, for instance, had found trade unions less responsive than they had hoped. The staff of one action research project found that the organisational structure of trade unions made negotiations complicated and time consuming. Not all educationists felt a strong sense of ambience with the TUC centres; one adult education worker said that before convincing the clients, it was necessary to convince the supervisor that education had any value. One WEA district withdrew its "Second Chance" course from the local TUC centre because of the constant interruptions of people walking through the classroom and because the atmosphere was said not to be conducive to liberal education.

Some complaints were made about job centres and DHSS offices. Students sometimes criticised the staff of job centres for not knowing or not giving them information about educational opportunities. The worker of one research project described the luke warm reception he received from a job centre. Another project worker was not allowed into the job centre at all with leaflets giving educational information, but was allowed to distribute them outside on the pavement.

The DHSS was criticised for its suspicious attitude to the twenty-one hour rule. Staff at DHSS offices were said to change very frequently, and often to be young and inexperienced. The twenty-one hour rule, it was claimed, was not properly understood and was interpreted differently from time to time and from one office to another.

The director of the polytechnic project mentioned on page 2 commented that professional workers often seemed to be as isolated in their ignorance of other supportive agencies which could give help as were the unemployed themselves. They tended, therefore, to take a narrow view and to deal only with those problems which came within their own professional competence, though the problems faced by the unemployed are legion and interrelated.

Some project workers also remarked on the lack of sympathy of local firms to requests for help in providing materials for use in community centres or classes. Some retailers were unwilling to provide space for the exhibition of information or students' work as a means of attracting and recruiting, or drawing attention to, the unemployed.

On the basis even of this piecemeal evidence it does seem that there is an educational task in changing the attitudes and broadening the vision of the employed in respect of the unemployed.

In practice, many adult education providers are closely meshed in with and have long standing relationships with other agencies in their neighbourhood. LEA, WEA, voluntary grass roots organisations, community organisations, tenants' and householders' associations, legal and action centres, work closely together. Co-operation depends on links built up over a period of years and on the time which can be spent on building up new links and consolidating old ones. These ongoing relationships often yield better results than hasty and less well prepared invitations to launch new projects.

Local networks can also be supportive to outreach workers, who can suffer from the same feelings of isolation as the unemployed themselves, particularly if they are appointed on a temporary basis, working outside the main centre, and not obviously part of the more traditional and well established adult education team.

Good relationships can also be built up with DHSS officers and job centres, where time can be found to visit and talk to staff. The co-ordinator of one "second chance" project not only visited the local DHSS office but invited members of the office staff to the college to see what the students were doing. This exercise produced good relations, though at the time when this project was visited relations had deteriorated owing to staff changes and a further approach to the DHSS was planned. In some centres and colleges each student is given a timetable with periods of study marked to take to the DHSS office when signing on.

Where a tactful approach is made, and the purpose of the exercise is clearly explained and understood, it is likewise possible to secure the support of staff in job centres. A number of job centres co-operate with neighbouring educational centres; workers have been successfully placed in job centres as part of recruitment and counselling projects, in one case as part of an ALBSU funded project. One counselling agency placed staff in a job centre as part of an outreach exercise. At least one adult education centre reported an outreach worker in the neighbouring job centre as a regular arrangement. This may well be more general.

Adult education staff play a large part in MSC funded courses and programmes. Some criticisms made of MSC seem to be misdirected in that adult education staff do not always familiarise themselves with the parameters within which the MSC works and are then aggrieved when projects are rejected because they fall outside MSC's clearly defined funding role. Nevertheless it would be unreal not to recognise that there are often differences in deciding where precisely the line between education and training should be drawn.

There is however extensive co-operation with MSC in the provision of MSC funded courses and in work with the Voluntary Projects Programme and the Community Programme. Despite the MSC's insistence on its training role, many MSC courses, particularly those at preparatory level, operate within a broadly based and liberal framework. In the area of training for second language speakers, and in the training of trainers, the small but single-minded group of specialists operating up and down the country, including the staff of Industrial Language Training Units, have probably had a far reaching influence on MSC training techniques and on the "sensitising" of instructors under the temporary employment programme. Adult educationists are making an increasing contribution

to the training of other MSC funded personnel, particularly those appointed on one year contracts.

Despite some criticisms of trade unions, there was evidence of much goodwill on the part of trade unions to a number of adult education projects. In one city trade unions were closely involved in the organisation of a federation of the TUC centres for the unemployed; one trade union had persuaded its members to put aside 3p per week each into a fund for the unemployed. Despite the WEA's reservation about the centre referred to above (page 7), the TUC had financed its "second chance" course for the first year and was likely to support it for a second year.

Churches were also found to be co-operative partners in educational endeavour, providing premises and in some cases funding courses. It is possible that their potential supportive role has not been adequately explored.

The problem of which agencies can be most helpful, and how their help can be enlisted, will clearly depend on local circumstances and on personality factors. It does seem to be the case that. where there has been longstanding experience of unemployment, the degree of co-operation between agencies, the development of networks and the mutual support provided is much greater than in areas where unemployment is an unfamiliar phenomenon, taking everyone by surprise. In the latter, people are unprepared; changes in attitudes and the development of supportive networks take time.

Some projects have been directed not only toward helping the unemployed, but toward making the employed more conscious of the problems of unemployment. Unemployed groups are sometimes partners with LEAs in their campaigns.

Research undertaken by Universities and Polytechnics is important in this context. One University Department of Adult and Continuing Education has undertaken a piece of action research whereby attempts to channel education through four different types of agencies are analysed and monitored. This research provides valuable insights into methods of working and much specific information backed by statistics.*

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* 'Beyond Tokenism - Unemployed Adults and Education', K Ward, University of Leeds, 1983.

III. ACCESS

1. Premises

It has been pointed out that publicity must be taken to where the clients are, the same is true of provision. Premises are themselves an important part of outreach.

Where the main provision is made in a central institution this may affect attendance by some sections of the community. While the well-educated and socially competent are mobile, the less confident have a fear of moving away from familiar ground. There is also the problem of fares which makes travelling into the centre of a town or city expensive.

A large, impressive building can also be intimidating. Even the large modern comprehensive or community school can be frightening to the parents of the children who attend it every day. The character of the building determines the character of the clients. Some buildings may bring back unwelcome memories of school days; some may gain a "middle class" image; some have have a degree of formality in their reception arrangements which puts people off. The actual facilities and resources which such centres offer may be excellent, but a large centralised and impressive institution is not always the best place to attract people with low confidence and a poor educational background.

In one authority it was admitted that the concentration of much of the non-vocational adult education into evening programmes in the technical college had an adverse effect on enrolments by some sections of the community. Elsewhere, older men in their 40s and 50s refused to go to "the Tec" because they said it was only for the young. In one case, 40 workers on CEP schemes were asked if they would attend basic education classes at "the Tec". All but one refused. It is worth remembering that many of the older unemployed did not benefit in their youth from apprenticeship schemes which included day release into further education, so that what goes on at their local college may be quite outside their experience.

It was continually stressed that provision must be local. Principals in one authority insisted that not only adult education, but the training of volunteers from among the unemployed, had to be done at local level. In another a bus was used to take PE and sports equipment to local centres. One LEA worker stressed that adult education "must make sense within its own area. There has got to be a reason to come in, and if you come in for one reason, to stay for another."

The unemployed were catered for in church halls, community centres and in local TUC centres. One outreach worker had been able to get women from nearby flats, who would never have attended the main institute building, into a small adult education annexe to the local primary school.

It is also important that there should be informality of access. Crossing thresholds must be easy. Where there is combined provision of adult education, community and youth work, and where there are networks of provision and small outposts, this appears to make for easier neighbourhood provision. However, where outlying centres are small and space and resources limited, informality may sometimes militate against education. As the Education Officer of one voluntary organisation commented, basic education cannot compete with a snooker table; the latter has to be dispensed with.

There are, of course, many informal centres in inner city areas and in depressed housing estates, which have extensive accommodation and a variety of resources and provision, where different groups and activities can exist side by side, and frontiers can be crossed easily. For example, one large LEA community centre on the edge of an old council estate, with high unemployment, was used by a variety of local groups. Rooms had been allotted to a self-governing unemployed group which was integrated into the constitutional structure of the wider community association. The group organised its own programme, and members also took part in a variety of educational and recreational activities which the centre provided.

Special arrangements are necessary for some groups. For example, if access to adult education for women is to be encouraged, then a creche must be provided. Special arrangements need to be made for Asian women and girls. The staff of two institutions referred to the difficulties involved in trying to cater for young Asian women. In one small centre it was arranged that provision should be made on one afternoon a week exclusively for Asian girls.

Finally, "informal" should not be regarded as synonymous with "down at heel" or shabby. A number of centres visited were modest, but also provided convenient room space, were decorated cheerfully and were comfortable to be in. Others seemed to suggest an assumption that anything would do for the unemployed.

2. Access arrangements

In order to facilitate access by the unemployed to a range of educational and recreational activities a number of LEAs have established access units and appointed access tutors. In some areas they are in effect detached workers whose job is to open up the fullest range of local facilities, negotiating access to further education colleges, adult education, community and youth workers, sports and recreational centres, drama groups and music societies. In other areas access tutors are appointed to higher and further education institutions with the dual responsibility of recruiting, receiving and counselling students on the one hand, and negotiating with heads of departments for access to courses and classes on the other.

In adult and community provision the outreach worker is not a new phenomenon; such workers may now have special responsibility for working with the unemployed or may have a long standing commitment to the disadvantaged (including the unemployed). Outreach workers in adult education and access tutors in further education have similar roles and responsibilities. They combine recruitment with counselling, bringing unemployed students together in a group to discuss personal and educational problems, perhaps to follow a core curriculum of basic education, while at the same time they sample courses and classes within the institution with a view to planning their own educational programme.

In one polytechnic visited, the access tutor had initially negotiated the use of the computer laboratory, the library and the sports centre by the unemployed,

many of whom were, in the initial stages of the experiment, past students of the polytechnic who had not found work. The clientele had however, widened and at the time of the visit a course tutor had been appointed with special responsibility for the unemployed group. Unemployed students were attending courses in several departments on a "twenty-one hour" in-fill basis and negotiations were proceeding with other heads of departments to extend these arrangements. The students themselves had been allotted their own room, with a telephone, a typewriter and tea-making facilities.

Similar arrangements existed in colleges of further education and community colleges. Students used craft and technical equipment on a drop-in basis or attended more formal courses. One access tutor, because of a merger of the technical college with adult and community provision, had a wide spectrum over which to operate and a great variety of choices to offer.

It would be naive to assume that access by unemployed students of various ages and backgrounds to institutions which have traditionally had fairly formal ways of working does not produce tensions. The unemployed do not bring in income; not all heads of department welcome in-fill.

It was difficult to ascertain from individual students how they felt about "dropping-in" to use equipment or facilities, perhaps with formal teaching going on around them, or how they coped with in-fill into courses which were in some cases specifically devised for the vocational training of a much younger and traditionally uniform age group. In one college it was said that no problems arose; in fact, many older men rose to the challenge because they wanted to show they were able to keep up with and do better than younger students. But in another college students expressed a strong preference for being taught as a group and said they felt awkward among young students on vocational courses. One woman felt that young students on a home economics course "closed ranks" against her.

Four areas were visited whose community schools gave access for adults to day time classes. In two of these it was said that the unemployed made little or no use of these facilities. In the other two areas, however, outreach workers based on community schools had made special arrangements by which groups of unemployed had their own accommodation, group tuition and their own educational programme. This was regarded as a more effective approach and in one area numbers had increased far beyond anticipation.

In adult centres access is perhaps less problematical insofar as all courses are part-time, many are interest-based rather than vocational, the age range tends to be wider than in further education, and because unemployed adults do not look or behave any differently from anyone else. Indeed in day-time provision in some inner-city areas it is likely that the majority are unemployed. Moreover many unemployed students come into a wide range of traditional classes independently without the assistance of any special access or outreach procedures and are indistinguishable from any other student. The point was made, however, that some questioning and re-assessment of teaching styles had become necessary where certain traditional types of course had begun to attract students with a background of educational disadvantage.

From an economic point of view, the same problems are raised by an influx of unemployed students in adult as in further education.

3. Access courses

Some specific courses are provided to help students gain access to further or higher education and training. Adult education centres may provide "access" or "foundation" courses in, for example, computing or secretarial skills. Some colleges of further education have one year access courses in sciences which lead into Polytechnics. Special access courses are provided in some areas whereby people from ethnic minority groups are helped to take training courses as teachers or social workers. Many "second chance" courses provide access to higher education, bypassing conventional GCE hurdles. These courses are considered in more detail in section IV (Provision).

4. Informal access

There are a number of centres used by unemployed people in an informal way, such as the TUC centres, and community and neighbourhood centres, provided by local authorities, the churches and many voluntary organisations. Together with social facilities, these may offer information, advice and counselling, sometimes with voluntary, sometimes with professional support.

These centres provide a point of contact with the unemployed; sometimes the LEA or WEA is invited in to provide an educational programme or individuals are referred to education. There are often facilities for developing hobbies, such as a woodwork room or a dark room for photography. It is not unusual to find that volunteers from among the unemployed users will undertake to help others to learn a craft - carpentry or in one case knitting. One group in a large community centre with generous space at its disposal had embarked on making beer and wine. Elsewhere tools and equipment were available for individual use. In one centre tools could be borrowed to take home, and sewing machines were available for use. The latter were much used by Asian women.

With professional support, hobbies can be developed into group activities. In one community centre a tutor working with a group of unemployed men in their thirties had developed photography and video linked with the men's hobbies and interests, such as motor vehicle maintenance and fishing. Photography and film making is also developed as a form of community involvement working from an informal base.

5. Fees and expenses

The cost of education is an important factor in access. In some areas, even with reductions, fees are still relatively high and, with few exceptions, have to be paid in advance. Where the reduction or waiving of fees is discretionary, this involves the embarrassment of a personal approach and interview. Fees for examinations are neither waived nor reduced, and these too have to be paid in advance.

To limit the definition of unemployment to the holders of form UB40 was generally regarded as unjust, particularly to women and those who had been out of employment for long periods due to illness or family circumstances. In the majority of areas visited the unemployed were admitted free or at a reduced rate to LEA centres. Many LEAs extended these arrangements to the dependants of the unemployed. Others widened eligibility to all those in receipt of any form of welfare benefit. Some centres admitted the unemployed at a nominal registration fee which entitled them to an educational "package". This might include basic education with a choice of a specific number of classes available in the centre.

A number of university extra-mural departments believed that they could best serve the unemployed by reducing their fees rather than by making special provision, though this made inroads into their revenue; some considered that there had to be limitations to the extent of the provision they could make at a reduced rate. The WEA aimed to make provision for the unemployed free. In at least two areas the LEAs were making good losses in revenue incurred by Responsible Bodies* (RBs) in providing for the unemployed.

It is normal practice to provide basic education free and where there are programmes for the disadvantaged, with special funding from eg the European Social Fund or the Inner City Partnership arrangements, fees are automatically waived.

Although fees may be a deterrent at the point of access, there are of course, other on-going expenses which students have to take into account. Concern was expressed by staff at the cost of materials which fell heavily on students in some classes which were among the most popular, such as art and craft or woodwork. The cost of suitable outfits to take part in some sports, such as badminton, and in keep fit classes, caused students to drop out. The inability of unemployed students to take part in outings to galleries and theatres was also noted.

In some centres it had been possible to provide materials to students free of charge but it was not always easy to do this where the unemployed attended on an in-fill basis. The WEA was able in some cases to subsidise extra class activities for unemployed groups, such as theatre visits, where these were relevant to the course. ("Educating Rita" was not unnaturally a popular choice.)

From the point of view of providers, while they may wish to do all they can to provide access to the unemployed as cheaply as possible, an increase in the number of unemployed students presupposes either special funding or compensating savings.

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* Responsible Bodies: University extra-mural departments and WEA Districts in receipt of grant from DES in respect of programmes of liberal adult education.

IV. PROVISION

It is difficult to deal with this subject under neat headings. Firstly there is a great variety of provision, and great variety within provision, and there are many overlaps. Secondly, unemployed people are to be found over the whole range of adult, further and community education. This survey was, moreover, made in the autumn of 1983; new initiatives are constantly being pioneered, others fail or are discontinued through lack of resources.

The general framework of further and adult education provision will no doubt be familiar to most readers. An attempt is made here to set this out as clearly as possible, and to make some comments on the suitability of provision for the adult unemployed.

1. Full-time courses

For the majority of unemployed adults, attendance at a full-time course is unlikely to be feasible financially. Full-time students are ineligible for unemployment or supplementary benefit, and other sources of maintenance support and limited in their scope. Mandatory student awards are only available for full-time higher education, and while an unemployed person may apply to his LEA for a discretionary award in respect of his attendance at a full-time non-advanced course, the funds available for such awards are limited. Occasionally other sources of support for the full-time student may be available: for instance, DES awards bursaries to students attending long-term residential colleges; projects supported through the European Social Fund may incorporate maintenance support for persons from specifically disadvantaged groups on full-time courses; while provision is made under the Treaties of Rome and Paris to enable workers made redundant from specified industries to retrain on full-time courses and to draw an allowance equivalent to their average take-home pay (an example of such an arrangement is the Iron and Steel Employees Rehabilitation Benefit Scheme ISERBS).

The main provider of full-time courses (and associated financial support) for the unemployed is, however, the MSC under its Training Opportunities Scheme. TOPS is open to people who are unemployed, or leave employment to take up the training, and who satisfy certain other conditions, mainly that they are over 19 and have been out of full-time education for 2 years. Exceptions are made to many of the normal eligibility rules in the case of disabled people. Within TOPS (which offers up to a year's training) there are 3 main types of provision:

a. Occupational training courses: these courses are provided in a wide range of subjects including management, technician, craft and office skills.

b. Training for enterprise courses: these are for people who wish to establish their own businesses and range from the New Enterprise

Programme which caters for people with a business idea likely to lead to the creation of a firm with 12 or more employees, through Small Business Courses for people with more modest business ideas to self-employment courses for those starting a one man business.

c. Work preparation courses: these are designed to help unemployed people who lack basic skills or confidence become more employable or achieve the entry standard for full training. Provision varies but courses may include some or all of assessment, work-related training in literacy, numeracy, ESL, training in job-getting skills, sampling or familiarisation training in occupational skills, and job rehearsals. Within the programme some special courses, Wider Opportunities for Women, are provided to help married women returners readjust to the labour market.

TOPS normally provides allowances although some work preparation courses, normally part-time, are offered on the basis that people remain available for work and can draw benefit. Courses are designed by providing bodies but MSC determines overall direction.

Under the Government's adult training strategy announced in "Training for Jobs" TOPS is being split into the 3 elements listed above and eligibility rules are under review. Consideration is also being given to a proposal to link training or work preparation with a substantial number of places in the MSC-funded Community Programme, which offers temporary job opportunities to long-term unemployed people.

MSC's terms of reference are limited to helping people obtain or retain jobs and MSC is not therefore able to finance courses that are directed to a wider range of individuals' development needs.

While, as already stated, the purpose of this enquiry was to look at education and not at training, it is important to remember that there is extensive co-operation between educational institutions and agencies and MSC in the programmes listed above. Educational resources, staff and expertise are widely utilised. This applies not only to higher and further education but also to non-vocational education and to both statutory and voluntary providers.

2. Part-time courses

Subject to certain conditions,* an unemployed person may study part-time while in receipt of benefit. Part-time education may be conveniently covered under the following headings:

a. Usage and adaptation of existing resources.

b. Programmes specially designed for the unemployed, which may be "special" in respect of:

i. recruitment;
ii. subject matter; or
iii. target groups.

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* See DES Administrative Memorandum 3/84, "Further Education for Unemployed People under the '21 Hours Rule'".

c. A further type of organisation which does not fall wholly within any of the above headings but may be part of LEA provision and have links with adult and community education, is the independent unemployed group.

a. Usage and adaptation of existing resources

i. General

Staff in adult education centres, when asked what was being done for the unemployed, pointed out that there were unemployed students over the whole range of their provision, but that with the exception of preferential fee arrangements, they did not, and did not wish to, distinguish them from other students or to create what were often referred to as "unemployed ghettos". It is important to remember that there are very considerable numbers of the unemployed in what is often referred to as "traditional" or "mainstream" adult education.

Even where there are special outreach workers or access tutors, they rely heavily on already existing resources. It has been shown that the role of access tutors in higher and further education is to open up existing courses and resources to the unemployed. In adult and community education, outreach workers often have the same function. An example already referred to in adult education is the "package" by which, on payment of a nominal registration fee students may take a core curriculum which includes basic education combined with a specific number of "traditional" classes.

"Second chance" education courses often rely on in-fill into already existing classes. Basic education, though it retains its emphasis on outreach and pioneer work, nevertheless is closely integrated into overall provision. It forms an essential component of the core curriculum offerred to in-fill students, to "second chance" students and to students involved in courses designed to increase overall competence and employability. Similarly ESL is increasingly taught within the context of practical skills, vocational or non-vocational.

It is therefore difficult, in work with the unemployed, to distinguish between special programmes and so-called "traditional" or "mainstream" programmes. As one centre head of an inner-city institution expressed it, all provision was part of an organised, progressive, mainstream programme of continuing education for the unemployed.

It is characteristic of adult, community and further education to try to respond to existing needs and to recognise and meet new ones. Class programmes and activities are modified and expanded to cater for particular groups. This can be seen most clearly in the small adult and community centres and annexes which closely reflect the needs of the local population.

There is interest in new modes of delivery and the extension of informal ways of working with unemployed people. A small number of institutions referred to their interest in developing flexible learning opportunities with the aid of learning packages and distance learning. It was not possible to follow up these initiatives or to investigate how far this type of provision was relevant to and suitable for the unemployed.

Work with the unemployed tends to break down some conventional patterns of provision. The unemployed themselves do not always distinguish between vocational and non-vocational education and training. They make use of the facilities available to them for their own ends. For example, they may use

access to technical equipment in colleges in an informal, interest-based way. They may enrol in non-vocational classes, or use open access to facilities in a community school to practice skills, to "keep their hand in", in case a job opportunity comes up. One college of art reported the increased numbers of young people attending day-time non-vocational classes with a view to building up a folio to apply for a place on a foundation course.

An attempt is made to keep provision as open-ended as possible and to extend opportunities for the unemployed. Some students look to basic and second chance education as a means toward further education and vocational training. Adult education centres sometimes provide classes which are interest based but which might serve as a means of stimulating a vocational interest or pave the way to entry into training. Courses in computing and secretarial skills may provide access to further education. One centre used its own excellent craft facilities and co-operated with other neighbouring colleges to provide a foundation year in which students could choose from a range of options in practical skills. On completion of the course, which was carefully monitored, students were able to apply to the specialist colleges, which had co-operated in the scheme, for vocational training.

It does seem that in work with the unemployed no clear line can be drawn on an institutional basis between vocational and non-vocational education.

ii. In-fill arrangements

As already noted, arrangements are made by access units and tutors in further education, and outreach workers in adult education, for unemployed students to in-fill into already existing courses. Attention has been drawn (page 12) to the problems which might arise where adult students in-fill into classes composed of younger age groups. Questions also arise where unemployed students might in-fill into vocational courses in further education.

For example, it was not clear to what extent staff involved in formal teaching were able to devote time and attention to students who dropped in informally to use equipment. It was difficult to ascertain how unemployed adults who could spend only twenty-one hours a week in education fitted into courses designed for a younger age group, who might be studying full-time, or be employed and attending on day release.

It was admitted by one college access tutor that most students want marketable skills. While college staff are not optimistic about job prospects they do not feel they can deny students the opportunities which the students themselves demand. It is likely, therefore, that some students attend vocational courses on a twenty-one hour in-fill basis with a view to increasing employability or even possibly to obtain a qualification.

What was not clear was whether time-tabling and curricula were being to any extent modified or adapted to meet these students' needs. Some staff said that modular courses could be adapted to unemployed students; others expressed the view that most unemployed students concentrated on practical skills. It does seem important that if there are unemployed students in-filling on vocational courses, either informally to use equipment or in the hope of increasing employability, there should be some logic and consistency to whatever can be offered within the twenty-one hours limitation.

It was also noticeable that departments such as engineering, where courses and students had declined in numbers because the local industries, which in the past their courses had served, had collapsed, readily welcomed the unemployed. By

contrast departments which could still be expected to see their students employed at the end of the course, such as catering, rarely had room for them.

iii. GCE and RSA courses

In discussion, many students expressed the view that 'O' levels were the gateway to further education and training and to greater employability. The 'O' level examination was a barrier which it was necessary to break through. Even to be on an 'O' level course was seen as conferring status. To work for an 'O' level lent a sense of purpose to life; to gain one gave a sense of achievement.

Institutions offering 'O' level courses reported increased enrolments, with a greatly increased proportion of unemployed. The character and clientele of 'O' level courses were said to have changed, with larger numbers in day time classes and an increase in students in their twenties and thirties, more working class students and more black people. English language and mathematics were said to be the most heavily subscribed subjects.

However, staff concerned in these subjects pointed out that many students who enrol for 'O' level courses have no idea of the discipline required to follow a concentrated course of study over one year. Some lack the necessary study skills. Some lack even the most elementary skills and need help in basic education. Such students are often given help in basic education and advised to study for an RSA first. This provides a goal to work for, but prolongs the period of study to two years.

It was admitted that in some fairly traditional adult education centres, enrolment procedures have not been developed in such a way that time can be spent on diagnosis and counselling for students who are unable to assess their own capabilities and make appropriate choices. It was also pointed out that students whose educational background is poor need a great deal of individual support and attention, and that staff do not always have the time to give this. Though numbers in 'O' level classes visited varied considerably, some certainly did seem too large for tutors to be able to give this individual support. It was also admitted that in some 'O' level courses a large number of students dropped out.

While there may well be unemployed adults who can take 'O' levels in their stride, there are many more for whom alternative forms of learning would be more appropriate. The question also arises as to why adults should have to face this examination at all. There must be more appropriate ways of assessing adult ability and adult potential than an examination devised for fifteen and sixteen year olds. By comparison with some other countries, notably the USA, this country has been slow to break away from traditional systems of qualification, geared to specific age levels, and take into account the wholly different experience and learning patterns of school children and adults.

iv. Literacy and basic education

The literacy campaign in its early days was directed toward a wide cross-section of society but the unemployed always formed a substantial percentage of the students. Present day basic education has come to cater increasingly for the unemployed, overwhelmingly so in day time provision. In recent years shortage of funds has inhibited active outreach but whenever a campaign is launched there is never any shortage of recruits. Among projects funded by ALBSU and ending between May 1982 and July 1984 nine were expressly aimed at the unemployed; but

nearly all ALBSU-funded projects are invariably sited in areas of high unemployment. Within basic education, particularly literacy tuition, many techniques now so relevant to the unemployed were pioneered, such as student centred learning, self-assessment procedures and the emphasis on support and confidence building.

Basic education courses tend to be "roll-on, roll-off". However, basic education has come to occupy a central position in work with the unemployed, forming the core curricula of many courses, and closely integrated into a variety of programmes which seek to increase confidence, competence, employability, and access to further education and learning. Much work is in co-operation with and complementary to MSC funded courses.

v. English as a second language

Broad programmes in ESL have been built up over the years, very often with funding from Section 11 or the Urban Programme. Other European nationals, people from South America and the Middle East, Hong Kong Chinese and Vietnamese are all catered for, as well as the larger numbers of New Commonwealth immigrants from the Asian sub-continent. As in literacy and numeracy classes, people who attend day time courses are almost by definition unemployed.

Expertise in second language teaching has developed strongly through the work of committed teachers and voluntary associations, and through the expertise developed by the ILTUs. Over the whole range of work in ESL there is increasing emphasis on skill-linked learning. Some training has been undertaken to "sensitise" instructors employed on MSC training courses to the problems of communication with second language speakers and a number of LEAs have pressed successfully for ESL specialists to work side-by-side with instructors employed by MSC to help to develop language skills within the context of practical learning.

ESL is closely integrated into courses for the unemployed where this is appropriate and forms a central core in many programmes directed particularly to second language speakers, with a view to providing a range of communication and practical skills, greater employability and help towards further education or training.

ESL is distinguished from the teaching of literacy insofar as many people who need ESL are competent in their native language and may indeed have reached high educational or professional levels of achievement in their own countries. The techniques of ESL, moreover, differ quite fundamentally from the techniques of literacy in the initial learning stages. However, ALBSU continues to include within its funding programme the educational needs of ESL students which can be provided for within the basic education programme.

vi. "Second chance" education

It might be argued that all adult education is "second chance" education. However, over the past 15 years courses have been developed by both RBs and LEAs under such titles as: "Second Chance", "Return to Learn", "New Horizons", or simply "Continuing Education", which aim to provide a structured continuum of learning.

These owe their origins to a commitment in adult education to providing mature people with opportunities for personal development, but also for changing directions. Though catering for a wide variety of students, they were intended

to make special provision for adults who, for a variety of reasons - personal, social or economic - had not realised their full educational potential, who wished to return to study as mature students, and for whom conventional institutions could not easily provide. Some courses were designed specifically for women who wanted to return to education and perhaps to the labour market after a period of domesticity and child rearing. In some cases the desire to move away from the horizontality of basic education led staff to develop opportunities for students to move on to "post basic" education which also offered the possibility for progression.

Such courses were not designed for the unemployed, but visits revealed that many students fell within this category. Moreover, the concepts and methodology of "second chance: education has provided a pattern and an example for the development of work with the unemployed.

The experience of basic education and pioneer work in inner-city areas has also contributed towards the methodology of courses for unemployed adults. Of particular value has been the experience of work with working class women. This combines flexibility with a student centred approach and emphasis on student support and counselling. In this context, tutors have had to practise what has often been professed in theory only; that is, they have had to start from the point where the student is, rather than from where the tutor thinks the student should go. This approach has been central to the initial stages of contact where informal discussion with the unemployed can prepare the way for an educational experience.

There are many differences in content and style in "second chance" courses. Some may follow a course of study with a negotiated curriculum over a finite period of time. Others may be less formally structured and encompass a wider spectrum of ability, though the concept of student choice remains central. Some adult centres, for example, make a continuing provision, from basic and post-basic education at one end to access to higher education at the other. Students are able to choose from a variety of options which the centre provides; they may enter or leave at any time, and join the course at the level which is appropriate to them. They may move vertically or horizontally within the course according to interest or varying levels of competence. Thus a student may be attending the basic numeracy or ESL component of a core curriculum, while at the same time studying English literature or sociology at an academic level.

In some cases, courses provide what might be called "jumping off" platforms for those who want a direct route towards employment or vocational training, and have no interest in longer term study; some incorporate 'O' levels. For others there is a more open-ended prospect, including the possibility of entry to University, Polytechnic or a long term residential college; such courses may provide an alternative route through to higher education, by-passing the conventional 'O' and 'A' level hurdles.

In this respect the institutional framework is important. A number of institutions, adult, further and higher, have combined in "open college" systems. In this way the availability of professional resources is increased, the options open to students are extended, and it is possible to pool the expertise of staff in curriculum development, monitoring and assessment. In some cases less formal arrangements exist between institutions and a local polytechnic, though some polytechnics show interest in developing links with "second chance" courses far afield.

While the content of such courses is various, there are many common elements. One characteristic is the emphasis placed on the involvement of students in planning their own curricula. In some cases this may be an individual exercise;

in others it may be the development of curricula by the group. In some long standing courses discussion is on-going and the curriculum may be changed from year to year. Students are also helped to understand the dynamics of group management so that they can exercise control over the learning process and plan not only what is to be learned but how it should be learned. The success of these procedures depends very much on the skill of the tutors, their ability to work with the students and to raise motivation as a basis for learning. It is not always easy to find tutors with the temperament or experience to work in this way.

The following may be said to be common components of "second chance" courses:

i. Flexibility, a student centred approach and a negotiated curriculum.

ii. A counselling component, personal, vocational and educational, in individual or group tutorials.

iii. Continuity and/or breadth of provision, allowing for entry at different levels of competence and providing for progression.

iv. A core curriculum of basic skills: communications and numeracy, study skills, reading, writing and comprehension.

v. Workshop or project-based learning with a view to heightening awareness of everyday experience, including creative writing, fact collecting and analysis leading to conceptualisation.

vi. Learning packages composed of options grouped round a core curriculum.

It should be noted that students who have gone on to higher education from courses of this kind have usually been accepted by faculties of humanities and social studies. It is less usual to find "second chance" provision in science and technology.

b. Programmes specially designed for the unemployed

These may aim to provide what has been discussed above - basic education, ESL, second chance, in-fill. They may be aimed at increasing employability, at job-seeking, at self-employment. They may be concerned with helping people to formulate their educational needs. They may be concerned with helping people to face up to unemployment and make choices for themselves, including the acceptance of alternatives to employment. They may be intended to help people to be more aware of their own interests and abilities with a view to taking the first steps towards any of these possibilities.

Special programmes are developed with particular groups in mind or with a view to helping unemployed people in particular ways. Outreach workers may begin with a view as to how best they can help the unemployed or they may wish to contact the unemployed to find out how they can help. Inevitably approaches to the unemployed will be influenced by "philosophies" and by the resources the outreach worker has at his/her disposal.

i. Recruitment, diagnosis and counselling

It is often pointed out that one of the difficulties of providing for the unemployed is that they are not a homogeneous group. Adult educationists have become experienced over the years at outreach work directed toward meeting the educational needs of special groups. The unemployed present a new challenge in

that they form a cross-section of society, though with a preponderant number from a disadvantaged educational and social background.

For this reason it is important that provision should be open ended; that outreach should be linked with "finding out" exercises, in which the unemployed are themselves involved in developing educational programmes; and that programmes should offer as wide as possible a variety of choice and opportunity. Because the lives of the unemployed will often have been narrowly defined by a limited educational background, it is important that adult educationists do not impose upon them one more limited or narrow aim. On the one hand they should be helped to develop and structure their own programmes; on the other, the full wealth of educational resources should be made more accessible to them and where necessary they should be helped to choose and become more independent.

Many project workers stressed that the unemployed needed what they called a "sorting out" period, which gave them time to assess themselves and their situation, and to experiment. This could be done through group discussion, with support and counselling, sometimes combined with educational "sampling" where the group was based on a college or centre. Access tutors in further education and outreach workers in adult education followed this pattern of working.

In other instances, project workers used informal discussion as a means by which a group could be helped to define needs and develop an initial curricular approach. The practice of preliminary discussion and the development of course content on the basis of the views expressed by the group has already been shown as characteristic of much "second chance" education.

One access tutor in a college of further education described how, during the initial period of provision, students' time-tables were deliberately under-subscribed so that there would be time for dealing with ESL and basic education needs and for discussion. This period was regarded as valuable because new ideas came from the students. Staff and students felt that they were learning together.

Some project workers saw themselves as "enablers" rather than tutors. One said her aim was not "to recruit with adult education" but to find out what people wanted and then help them toward whatever agency could provide for their interests. Another said she was not concerned with "courses or classes", but with discussion and counselling, as a result of which individuals experienced a degree of catharsis, clarified their own ideas and made decisions about directions.

Inevitably some groups of this kind attract people who find decision-making difficult and need considerable on-going support. In this case the group may become an end in itself. One centre visited, which had a full-time professional counsellor, was concerned with support for unemployed people who had suffered illness or breakdowns. There was an educational programme in the centre and one or two individuals had been successfully referred to facilities within the community. By contrast, one project visited was designed to help the more independent to stand on their own feet as quickly as possible.

ii. Subject matter

A number of institutions provide courses to help people become self-employed. Support is also given in informal groups to people who hope to become self-employed or set up co-operatives. In one evening class visited not all the students were unemployed. Some were employed but hoping that one day they would set up on their own. Some were already self-employed but wanted "tips" on how to deal with their VAT. Others expected to become redundant.

How effective such courses are is difficult to determine, but it would seem that they are generally better run within the context of the professional expertise of the appropriate department of a further education college, rather than in evening classes or tucked away in further education annexes. Many further and higher education institutions do in fact provide these courses, sometimes funded by MSC. An attempt is made to give on-going support to students after they leave the course, and in some cases access to computer equipment. MSC monitors the progress of ex-students on courses which it funds.

Successes were reported by two organisations visited which were professionally orientated to helping people toward employment or self-employment. Two main factors were said to militate against self-employment: lack of capital, and lack of all round "know-how" in running a business. Men made redundant from responsible positions in a large firm had functioned very efficiently within their own sphere of responsibility but could not grapple with the whole range of functions required of the self-employed.

For example, one adult education centre had put a disused workshop and equipment at the disposal of a group of men who wanted to form a co-operative, but the venture failed to get off the ground. A skilled craftsman echoed the above conclusion when he said, "We know how to produce the goods, but we don't know how to get the business". By contrast, a group of Asians, supported and provided with unused temporary accommodation by an independent agency, were making chutneys and pickles and selling them to some large London stores.

In one college of further education a group of woodwork students proposed an exhibition of their work in a local supermarket. This resulted in many sales and in further orders being placed. Unfortunately, the team accepted orders which individual members of the group were not always willing to fulfil, and the project had to be abandoned. Where goods were sold the college was paid for materials freely supplied.

It is a tacit assumption that basic education will increase employability. Some institutions combine basic education and communication skills with practical and vocational skills, preparation for 'O' levels or 'O' level courses with a view to increasing competence and employability, or helping students towards further education and training. In some cases these courses are specifically designed for black people or people for whom English is a second language, or alternatively, they attract students from different ethnic backgrounds. Similar courses are provided for women students, designed to improve basic communication skills and numeracy, to increase social competence and personal confidence and introduce women to skills hitherto regarded as exclusively or primarily male preserves. Courses of this kind may also include a component of job-seeking skills.

There are also "job-seekers" courses specifically designed to help people to become employed. These are provided by RBs, LEAs and voluntary bodies and are often short, intensive courses, concentrated into a week or less. The aim is to stimulate students to becoming more confident and take initiatives. Students are helped to look for jobs and to assess their own capabilities in relation to the job market. There are exercises in telephone enquiries, writing letters of application and interview techniques. These courses attract students from a wide range of backgrounds, including graduates, who are often said to have little idea about how to apply for jobs. Providers of these courses drew attention to their policy of siting them in areas where "job-seeking" might have some chance of success and avoiding areas where the rate of unemployment was high.

Help in job-seeking is also given by many informal centres on a drop-in basis.

"Know your rights" courses are provided by LEAs and the WEA. These cover information about social security benefits, housing benefits and legal rights. A good deal of information is also given on an informal basis. Voluntary organisations and centres provide an informal drop-in service. TUC and LEA centres often employ staff or use volunteers to provide information and advice in this way. Much work of this kind is done by volunteers, sometimes themselves unemployed. While the role of volunteers in this work is of value, the experience of unemployment is not in itself a qualification for understanding and advising on the complicated regulations of social security. Without training and support this kind of service is likely to be uneven. Welfare rights "packages" are being produced, but it is not known how widely these were being used.

A number of providers drew attention to the concern felt by women about problems of health, diet and budgeting on a reduced income, and attempted to provide courses and classes to meet these needs.

"DIY" appears to be popular. This was provided with a greater or lesser degree of formality, sometimes in courses, sometimes in one-day sessions, sometimes in a more casual drop-in style. Home repairs, electrical repairs, home decorating and joinery or carpentry were covered. Some centres provided courses for women in basic repair skills. Car maintenance was popular, and motor-bicycle maintenance was provided for younger men. One informal group provided a motorbike which young unemployed men learned to ride and to maintain.

Some other subjects were regarded, on the basis of experience of work with the unemployed, as being attractive to unemployed people. For example, many unemployed people are attracted to art classes. In one area visited attention was drawn to a demand for drama, which was said to be difficult to satisfy.

Creative writing is regarded as having a therapeutic value, as well as being effective educationally as a means toward greater awareness, self-development and more effective communication. Through creative writing the value of individual experience and the power of expression are emphasised. Creative writing forms an important component of basic, post-basic and "second chance" education. In basic education an ALBSU-funded project worker promotes and supports student writing, working with basic education groups in the production of the periodical "Write First Time".

Music and dancing are attractive to young people and are often provided through agencies already serving the needs of unemployed youth. Afro-Caribbean styles of music and dancing have been developed and the appropriate instruments supplied, for groups and classes.

Sports attract a mainly male clientele. One LEA has concentrated on developing centres which provide sports facilities, tuition and training and the promotion of team sports and games, catering for young unemployed males. Teams take part in competition and matches locally and further afield.

iii. Provision for particular target groups

It would be wrong to try to arrange the unemployed in a hierarchy of need. The experience of unemployment cannot be said to be worse or better for those made redundant at fifty after a lifetime's work by contrast with the young who have never had a job at all. There is no reason to assume that the unemployed graduate finds life any easier, or is more adept at job-seeking, than the school leaver with one CSE. The assumption that the majority of women are "housewives" who do not need a job or work for "pin money" is not consistent with reality.

Priorities need to be established locally in relation to conditions in the area, the material resources available and the human expertise that can be brought to bear on the task.

In practice, adult educators appear to be trying to provide on a wide front, on the one hand attempting to make access to existing facilities easier, on the other developing special programmes. In the course of this enquiry there was much evidence of concern for the needs of special groups and much imaginative development of outreach and provision to satisfy them.

In some cases particular areas were defined as demanding attention: large council estates where the rate of unemployment was known to be high; areas where old established and traditional forms of local employment had suddenly disappeared; depressed inner-city areas; rural areas where unemployment is less easy to identify and where scattered population centres and transport problems make it difficult to contact and bring people together.

Particular age groups were identified as needing help. A number of projects were specifically designed to help the older age group for whom the trauma of unemployment was believed to be severe. Project workers were also much concerned with the eighteen to twenty-five age group who were said to be socially alienated, most in need of help, and most difficult of all groups to contact, to interest and to work with.

There is on-going work with women in informal groups and in courses and classes. "Wider Opportunities for Women", and "New Opportunities for Women" courses combine discussion, counselling, educational programmes, assertiveness training and skill tasting. There are some courses in particular skills such as woodwork or carpentry specifically for women.

In some areas links are built up with organisations which serve particular disadvantaged groups. For example, one adult education centre provided a considerable programme for an organisation concerned with single, homeless people, including men and women from a variety of ethnic backgrounds.

Long standing links exist between adult education providers on the one hand and organisations concerned with the care of the mentally and physically handicapped and the mentally ill. European Community funding had enabled one adult college visited to provide a class for multiply handicapped people from ethnic minority groups.

A number of institutions and agencies drew attention to their success in catering for the special interests and needs of young black men and women and to the good relations built up with independent Afro-Caribbean associations which cooperated in developing educational programmes.

There is on-going work with young offenders, ex-offenders and people on probation, undertaken by LEAs, and by voluntary organisations, often with the co-operation of the Probation Service.

One centre had provided accommodation for a group of young graduates who were engaged in making costumes and producing street drama.

Obviously this brief summary does not do justice to the provision that is being made or to the effort and imagination which goes into trying to meet so many and such varied educational needs. Nor would it be correct to imply that adult educationists are satisfied with what they are doing or believe that they are doing much more than scratching the surface.

Some groups are particularly difficult to contact, recruit and cater for. Unemployment adds urgency to the need for outreach, but makes the task more difficult. For example, many young people and ex-offenders were influenced by the incentive of employment to come into basic education; that incentive is no longer as influential as it was.

One particular cause for concern was expressed quite separately in three areas visited, in the north, in the midlands and in the south. These were all areas in which there had been a large settlement of Asian families, many of whom had come from poor peasant backgrounds; they had a poor command of English and were often illiterate in their own language. They had come to this country to work and had taken mainly unskilled jobs sometimes at lower than average pay, and had been among the first to find themselves unemployed. They had little prospect of finding other jobs and were seen to be closing in on themselves, falling back on their own communities, becoming increasingly isolated and increasingly difficult to recruit into education.

However, this did not apply only to those Asian communities who came mainly from a peasant background. Adult educationists are familiar with the strong motivation of Asian youth to improve qualifications and job prospects and to use adult education for this end. One adult education principal expressed the view that a number of Asian students had, in effect, given up and saw no point in working for RSAs and 'O' levels which seemed to lead nowhere.

Similar concern was expressed for Vietnamese families, which unlike Asian families, tend to be settled in isolation and not in communities. They were scattered, difficult to cater for and had not been successful, in general, in finding employment.

It is ironic that with the considerable strides that have been made in the techniques of teaching ESL and linking ESL with skills, some people of Asian and Vietnamese descent may feel that adult education has little to offer them.

c. Independent groups

Groups of unemployed people are often provided with accommodation by statutory or voluntary organisations. This accommodation may consist of a room or rooms in an adult or community centre; sometimes quite separate accommodation is provided. Some groups may have a room allotted to them for a weekly or monthly meeting only. They structure their own programme and may ask for the occasional speaker. Others use their accommodation daily. They may ask for classes to be provided, or be encouraged to take part in the classes or social activities of the centre on which they may be based. In some centres visited the expertise of individuals within the groups had been drawn upon to provide voluntary tuition to other group members. Some unemployed groups become involved in job exchange schemes or voluntary work in the community.

The provision of accommodation for the unemployed is intended to be open-ended and not an indirect form of recruitment into adult education. Groups are

encouraged to plan their own activities or left on their own to do so. However, it did seem that where groups were housed within an adult or community centre, and/or where there was support from a professional worker, a structured programme which included educational opportunities was more likely to emerge than in groups which were more independent.

The character of the latter differed very considerably in composition, organisation and intentions. Some had begun with a dynamism that could not be sustained, perhaps because the most able found employment. Some seemed to fall in on themselves, practising the rituals of committee procedures with no other purpose, it seemed, than to preserve status through hierarchical structures. Some were inexperienced in organisation and in handling funds.

However, some independent groups were functioning very effectively, meshing in with the existing local community organisations, helping their members to cross frontiers and to gain access to a variety of facilities and opportunities. Some negotiated with LEAs and the WEA for vocational and educational courses. Some successfully applied for funding to provide educational and technical equipment in their own centres.

A number of independent groups had become active in drawing attention to the problems of the unemployed, persuading Trade Unions, local authorities and other agencies to give more positive support. One such group had been highly successful in mobilising local support and raising funds. One group encountered had become politically militant.

V. SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS

In dealing with the unemployed it is difficult to draw a clear line between counselling on the one hand and advice and information giving on the other. The problems of the unemployed are legion, both on-going and immediate. It is also difficult to distinguish between educational and personal counselling. Unemployed students may be wrestling not only with unfamiliar learning tasks, but also with the tensions which unemployment generates within families, or worrying about how to pay next week's rent.

However, it does seem to be the case that often information is being given when what is required is counselling. This may be due to inexperience or shortage of staff time, or because a counselling component has not been built into enrolment procedures or course curricula.

It is possible to identify three points at which students may secure counselling, advice and information.

a. Initial contacts

There are a number of well established agencies which combine a professional educational counselling and information service. These have in the past been mainly concerned to help people who have some educational background or some idea of what they want, together with the necessary "know how" to locate sources of information and the necessary confidence to go and ask. Reference has already been made (page 5) to two agencies of this sort which have responded to unemployment by developing more positive outreach and supportive roles in response to unemployment.

There are informal, drop-in centres where staff, sometimes with professional qualifications in counselling, and volunteers give information and advice in response to a great variety of enquiries, including educational ones. Some staff may be employed and volunteers placed in adult education, community and TUC centres to provide this service. Independent groups of unemployed people give this kind of help and support to individuals. One such group had a roster of members so that there was always someone at the centre to answer queries and give support. Many adult education staff find themselves giving information and help of this kind as part of their everyday work.

There are a number of outreach projects in which a worker is placed in a job centre or a TUC centre, or with an agency, with the aim of drawing the attention of the unemployed to educational opportunities, giving information and advice and recruiting directly.

b. Reception and induction

It has already been pointed out that for many reasons unemployed students coming into adult education for the first time need help in making choices. In some cases, the reception of the unemployed appeared perfunctory. Perhaps this was

because of shortage of staff-time, perhaps because of lack of imagination. People who are ignorant of, or fear, education may have made an immense effort of will to get themselves to an educational establishment; they may be experiencing a degree of desperation in their lives and panic at entering an unfamiliar environment. The reception of the unemployed is clearly important to their subsequent educational experience and development.

This was in practice accepted in outreach and access programmes. An induction period was regarded as central to the educational process. This might involve helping individuals to structure their own programme and to sample; it might bring unemployed students together in groups for mutual and tutorial support, and to plan course curricula.

Access tutors placed differing emphasis on their supportive role. For some, induction procedures were seen as the means toward helping students move out of the access group and to become independent. One access tutor in a college of further education had an active role in helping his students during an initial period of twelve weeks, during which time they were able to sample and experiment. After this it was hoped that the students would move on to a consistent timetable. This tutor felt that he would have failed in his task if the students had not disappeared into other courses and classes by the beginning of the second term.

By contrast, other tutors stressed the importance of an ongoing supportive role. It is not possible to be didactic about this: counselling ought not to be cossetting; individual powers of adaptation and independence differ. On the other hand people who lack confidence and whose personal lives are beset with difficulties may need maximum support to help them sustain effort and motivation.

c. Ongoing support

Unemployed students were said to be easily discouraged by what they saw as their own inadequacies and were frequently under pressure at home. Spouses, children, friends and relations were often unsympathetic to education. One tutor in a college of further education which provided 'O' level courses for the unemployed said that there were insufficient staff to provide individual tutorial support, with the result that students fell behind, lost heart and dropped out "in a spiral of diminishing returns".

In some cases student counselling and support was built into course structure. In one outreach project tutors were said to spend 40% of their time in counselling and 60% in teaching. Access tutors were also course tutors or co-ordinators; their role remained central to provision. Elsewhere tutors involved in provision had a counselling role, or there were members of staff with direct responsibility for counselling. Tutorials were timetabled for educational and personal counselling and were considered important in confidence building and in reinforcing motivation. The role of the group was seen as important in this context, and unemployed students were brought together regularly for a core curriculum or for discussion and mutual support.

VI. FUNDING

Adult education workers are continually in search of funds. The various forms of central funding, eg through the Urban Programme and Section 11, are well known. The Department of Education and Science funds ALBSU, contributes to some special RB appointments and supports research. The MSC supports a very considerable programme in which further and adult education establishments and voluntary organisations participate. To these resources have been added the European Social Fund and special arrangements such as ISERBS. There are besides, a number of charitable foundations and some commercial firms which support adult and community education.

LEAs and universities allot money from their budgets for special projects. Within WEA Districts, Branches allot some part of their resources to outreach work and funds are transferred within districts to areas of deprivation. A number of RBs are helped by DES funding to appoint tutors with special responsibility for work with the unemployed.

Shortage of funds can be debilitating, especially for voluntary organisations like the WEA, which has a strong tradition and much practical experience of pioneer work, coupled with a conviction of the potential value of its contribution.

The search for funds is time consuming and applications for central funding are often complicated and expensive of staff time. Applying to an international agency may present even more forbidding problems. It is not unusual to hear complaints that fund-raising drains time and energy which should be devoted to education itself.

Special funding is moreover, short term, which gives rise to uncertainty and makes planning difficult. Some courses appear to have been cliff-hanging for most of their existence. It is usually necessary, once a course has been launched, to start having to look round for the funds to help it keep going the following year. This also applies to staff. Many staff encountered on this survey were appointed on a 3 year, 2 year or one year basis, and were worried about their own futures and about what would happen to the work if the appointment was not renewed.

Uncertainty about the future, anxiety about the constant search for funding, must have some effect on the performance of tutors and outreach workers. Even where staff are full time the input of funds on a temporary basis does not necessarily ensure continuity. In at least one case uncertainty about funding had made necessary a withdrawal from commitment to a class painstakingly built up, with resulting ill feeling.

However, special funding has become part of the pattern of adult education. It defines priorities; it holds out the means for tackling them; and it enables educationists to mount programmes which would otherwise be too expensive or

would drain away resources from the normal adult education budget to an intolerable extent.

The definition of priorities by central funding generally reflects the views of adult educationists on the need for special programmes for disadvantaged groups. The problems of special funding would appear to arise less from its centrality than from its short-term nature.

VII. TRAINING

Training needs must be considered in relation to a). the effects on professionalism of short-term funding; b). the role of volunteers; and c). the needs of professional staff as trainers and providers.

a. Short term funding may result in a dilution of professionalism. One head of a community college expressed the view that a one year appointee spends three months learning the job, six months doing it and three months looking for the next. Even where one year appointees have a professional background it is often difficult to do justice to the job in the time allowed. Induction is often fairly perfunctory. Where there is an inadequate background of professionalism, one year appointments do not give people sufficient time to come to grips with the job.

This seemed to be the case with some supervisors appointed to TUC centres. The management of a centre which may be used by different groups for a variety of purposes requires a high degree of professional skill if things are to run smoothly and constructively. This skill did seem to be lacking in some centres.

A number of LEAs and RBs have initiated training for MSC appointees, but the resources put into training people who will do the job for one year only are likely to be disproportionate to the results. Besides, there is little time for training on a full-time job which has to be mastered within a year.

b. A considerable amount of material has already been published on the relationship between unemployment and volunteering. It was not possible during this survey to give close attention to the use of volunteers or the extent to which volunteers are coming forward to work in educational programmes for the unemployed, and if so, in what capacities. In a great many contexts unemployed people were clearly doing a great deal to help each other on a voluntary ad hoc basis. Many providers drew attention to the imporant role which volunteers were playing in their centres.

The experience of the literacy campaign, "Parosi", and later work in basic education has shown how valuable the contribution of volunteers can be, and has provided experience in training and support for volunteers. It is likely that volunteers will continue to be involved in basic education programmes for the unemployed.

However, volunteers appear to have wider and more diffuse roles in relation to the unemployed, and if they are to function effectively as counsellors or as advisers on the complicated details of welfare benefits, different forms of training and support would seem to be necessary.

c. There has been considerable and growing expertise in adult education in working with disadvantaged groups, and this experience has been brought to bear on work with the unemployed. Unfortunately, few full-time workers have time to

stand back and analyse their successes and failures, and in periods of economic stringency there are few opportunities for professional workers to meet and to discuss with and learn from each other.

Visits made in the process of this enquiry sometimes brought workers from different institutions, agencies and areas of a large county or city together. Feelings of guilt at taking so many busy people away from their work were to some extent assuaged by assurances that the occasion had provided an opportunity for colleagues to meet, to hear what was going on elsewhere in the same authority, and to compare notes.

There is a fund of information arising from practical experience which can be pooled; there have been a number of action research projects which provide specific information, analysis, and a framework within which ideas can be further developed.

VIII. THE VALIDITY OF THE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE

Problems are easy to define, good practice less so. Providers differ in their view of what constitutes good practice, and the views of the educators and those who are being educated are also likely to diverge. There is little doubt that the majority of the unemployed would define good practice in education as education which leads to a job.

In the process of offering education to the unemployed only the most naive could remain undisturbed by questions about the purpose of their endeavours. It is important that providers should be clear about their own objectives and that these objectives should be made clear to students. Students should be made aware that while education can improve employability, it cannot provide a job. Nevertheless the unemployed do embark on courses with employment in view, and adult education workers do face the dilemma of seeing students, whose independence and freedom of choice they wish to support and encourage, making choices which they believe may be misguided or over-optimistic.

One view expressed disapproval of education as "the opiate of the unemployed". It is doubtful if many adult educationists would accept this. Carried to its logical conclusion this argument would presumably imply denying education to the unemployed because it was actually doing them harm.

It has never been part of the tradition of adult educators in this country to set themselves political ends, but it has been part of that tradition to help people to function more effectively and more independently within a social and political context. This underlies much provision in basic and "second chance" education.

Adult education has a practical role in helping the unemployed to deal with immediate and pressing problems, through counselling and information giving, on welfare rights, legal rights, housing benefits, health and diet and a variety of "DIY" provision. There are many ways in which education can and does support personal interests and hobbies. It can make individuals more aware of community needs and help them to play a constructive role within their own community.

There was much evidence from the unemployed as to the value which they placed on their educational experience. Some students spoke in glowing terms about their courses. They said that they had discovered new interests and pleasures, and talents they did not know they had. Education had given them a new purpose in life; they had rediscovered a sense of achievement. One young man said he had no idea he would have enjoyed writing essays and reading "English literature".

The importance of the social dimension of the adult class has long been recognised, and this seemed to be of particular value to the unemployed. To participate within a social context in an exercise which adds to understanding, interest and personal development must be a good use of leisure, all the more so

for the isolated and dejected whose leisure is enforced. Attention has already been drawn to the isolation of unemployed people and to the therapeutic effects of belonging to a group, which shares the experience of unemployment and in which members provide mutual support. The assertion that the class had "saved my life" was made more than once.

However, it is not intended to suggest that, even with the far-reaching efforts that have been made to serve the unemployed, the pattern of provision is sufficiently flexible to cater adequately for all their educational needs. On the contrary, the attempt to accommodate mature unemployed people within the existing framework has served to draw attention to its inadequacies and to the irrelevance of many of the basic assumptions on which it rests. Mature adults are still being expected to slot into courses designed for the eighteen plus age groups and to study for examinations designed for fifteen and sixteen year olds. It is necessary to develop educational strategies by which learning is more closely related to adult experience and the concept of continuing education given greater reality in practice.

Finally, while students spoke so enthusiastically about their educational experiences, the question must be asked whether they will express the same view in three or four years time. No matter how excellent the education received, no-one wants to go on being educated indefinitely. New students will come forward; but some old ones will inevitably become disillusioned and drop out.

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